

Council

19:30 to 21:45

25 January 2022

Present: Councillors Maguire (Lord Mayor), Button, Bogelein, Brociek-Coulton, Carlo, Champion, Driver, Everett, Fulton-McAlister (M), Fulton-McAlister (E), Galvin, Giles, Grahame, Hampton, Harris, Haynes, Huntley, Jones, Kendrick, Lubbock, Manning, Maxwell, Oliver, Osborn, Packer, Price, Sands (M), Sands (S), Schmierer, Stonard, Stutely, and Waters,

Apologies: Councillors Ackroyd, Davis, Peek, Thomas (Va) and Thomas (Vi) Wright and Youssef

1. Lord Mayor's Announcements

The Lord Mayor explained the procedures for this informal meeting of the council that was being held remotely on public health grounds. Members would discuss the items on the agenda and then a vote taken. The votes cast would be ratified and used to inform decisions made at an in person meeting of a quorum of members of the council to be held on 26 January 2022.

He had recently attended the memorial service for Sir Timothy Colman.

2. Declarations of interests

The Lord Mayor declared a non pecuniary interest in item 8b as the office of Lord Mayor held the title of Admiral of the Wensum.

Councillor Schmierer declared a non pecuniary interest in item 8a as he was employed by Voluntary Norfolk.

Councillor Harris declared a non pecuniary interest in item 8b as a members of the Broads Authority.

3. Public questions/petitions

The Lord Mayor announced that one public question had been received.

The public question was from Mr Alexander Catt.

Mr Catt asked the leader of the council the following question:

“I have recently been involved with a new community group which has been trying to establish itself, with advice from the council. Most of the feedback I’ve received from members of the group suggests that the process for establishing a community group is not clearly laid out anywhere and is convoluted. Furthermore, it seems it can often be very difficult to get movement on things from the council. This could be easily rectified by having a defined, publicly available and promoted process for these groups to follow. Would the council agree to publish such a document?”

Councillor Waters, the leader of the council gave the following response:

“The council’s Lumi website provides access to online resources for community groups. There is guidance to support new projects and best practice materials on, for example, governance approaches.

Nonetheless, we recognise a one-size-fits-all approach is not realistic. There is a variety of potential structures, requirements and legal considerations based on the ambitions of the group, which dictate the approach needed. For groups wishing to work alongside the council, experience demonstrates each new enquiry and opportunity, whilst having commonalities, requires an individual, bespoke approach.

The council’s community enabling team endeavours to walk groups through the process, establishing what sits within the council’s remit, and balancing conflicting priorities. This often requires new approaches to make it work for all parties.

The council is currently developing an agreed processes to ease the progression of standard green space enquiries. This will not fit all enquiries but will be publicly available on completion.”

Mr Catt thanked Councillor Waters for the response to his question but said that the officers working with the community group had not made them aware of the process. There needed to be training of these officers to ensure that they were aware of the process, or if a new process had been identified, it needed to be given to officers who should make it much clearer to community groups and needed promote it more. Would that be something that the council could do?

Councillor Waters reassured Mr Catt that the officers were experienced. So experienced that they had successfully bid for £500k for Community Renewal Fund for environmental, biodiversity and green space projects and the employment of 8 community connectors to work with communities and community groups. He pointed out that the council had a bespoke relationship with each community group and were non-political groups of people focused on doing good things in the communities in which they lived. There were issues about establishing the right kind of governance arrangements and obtaining the right paperwork for applications to the Get Started Grant which caused delays. Expectations also needed to be realistic as every organisation or group that established itself was full of enthusiasm and ambitious for its community. But that relationship, which he had outlined in his response to the original question, about understanding the role of the council and the autonomy and ambitions of each community group to achieve their objectives, would have a

successful outcome. He acknowledged that there was sometimes impatience with the process of establishing a community group, but he was confident that every community group in the city had benefited from that support. The website Lumi ([Lumi - The Norwich Community Sharing Hub](#)) was full of good practice to help community groups. He hoped that the community group that Mr Catt was involved in would move ahead and achieve its objectives to benefit its community.

4. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November and 1 December 2022.

5. Questions to Cabinet Members/Committee Chairs

The Lord Mayor said that seventeen questions were received from members of the council to cabinet members/committee chairs for which notice had been given in accordance with the provisions of the council's constitution.

The questions are summarised as follows:

- Question 1:** Councillor Maxwell to the cabinet member for resources on the Local Government Settlement.
- Question 2:** Councillor Driver to the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion on retrofitting funding.
- Question 3:** Councillor Huntley to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on the Kings Arms site.
- Question 4:** Councillor Stutely to the cabinet member for environmental services on social supermarkets.
- Question 5:** Councillor Giles to the leader of the council on the Community Renewal Fund.
- Question 6:** Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on the Transport for Norwich Strategy.
- Question 7:** Councillor Peek to the cabinet member for environmental services on housing on Ketts Hill.
- Question 8:** Councillor Price to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on reducing funding from car parking.
- Question 9:** Councillor Haynes to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on affordable housing in developments.
- Question 10:** Councillor Galvin to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on planning conditions for Heigham Park tennis courts.

- Question 11:** Councillor Osborn to the cabinet member inclusive and sustainable growth on parking outside schools.
- Question 12:** Councillor Grahame to the cabinet member for digital inclusion and climate change on energy bills.
- Question 13:** Councillor Schmierer to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on enforcement officer shortages.
- Question 14:** Councillor Champion to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on land on Morley Street.
- Question 15:** Councillor Wright to the cabinet member for health and wellbeing on the income stream from parking at parks..
- Question 16:** Councillor Carlo to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on sewage pumped into the River Wensum.
- Question 17:** Councillor Bogelein to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on secure entryway systems..

(Details of the questions and responses were available on the council's website prior to the meeting and attached to these minutes at Appendix A, together with a minute of any supplementary questions and responses.)

6. Appointment of external auditors

Councillor Kendrick moved and Councillor Driver seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

Following debate it was,

RESOLVED, unanimously, to accept Public Sector Audit Appointments' invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023.

7. Treasury management mind year review

Councillor Kendrick moved and Councillor Stutely seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

Following debate it was,

RESOLVED, unanimously, to:

- 1) Note the contents of the report and in particular the treasury management activity undertaken in the first six months of the 2021/22 financial year; and

- 2) Note the impact of proposed changes to the Treasury Management Code

8. Motions

(Notice of the following motions, 8(a) to 8(f), as set out on the agenda, had been received in accordance with the council's constitution.)

8 (a) Motion: Drink spiking

The motion was proposed by Councillor Jones and seconded by Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister.

“In recent months there has been concern in this city about rising reports of spiking incidents, largely targeting women. We have seen the nationwide ‘Girls Night In’ campaign gaining traction, with Norwich based protests taking place on 26th October. Worryingly, in this same evening, 5 people were spiked by injection. To the 8 November, 49 reports have been received by Norfolk Police – 34 drink spiking and 15 by injection. In response, the Police have engaged extensively with licensees, working with venues on new and extended measures to help keep our young and vulnerable people safe in the city’s late-night economy.

Council **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) Welcome the introduction of more routine searches including the use of detector devices; initiatives such as dedicated welfare officers; safe zones for people that are vulnerable or become unwell; caps for open drink containers, sign-in systems, and improved staff training will all contribute to a safer environment.
- 2) Thank Norfolk Constabulary for continuing to expand their excellent work in this area and increasing resources for further engagement with venues and additional plain clothed patrols in spiking hot spots.
- 3) Call on the Government to increase police funding for the purpose of tackling this character and type of offending which includes spiking in drinks and by injection, sexual assaults in night-time venues and all forms of harassment and discrimination
- 4) Continue working closely with Norfolk Police, Licensees (directly and through business groups such as the Licensing Forum), to support the introduction of new measures that will improve safety in the city’s late-night economy
- 5) Continue to support the work of volunteer organisations such as SOS Bus and Street Presence pastors
- 6) Work closely with partners, including Norwich BID, to raise awareness among all late-night license holders and encourage the widespread adoption of new measures

- 7) Work with relevant partners to incorporate strategies that tackle these new forms of offending behaviour including the potential to develop a night-time safety charter that seeks to eliminate spiking in drinks and by injection, sexual assaults, all forms of harassment and discrimination in our city, and to ensure all visitors and staff get home safely and promote the charter across the city.
- 8) Continue to enforce all four licensing objectives wherever there is confirmed evidence of breaches.

8(b) Motion: Honouring the River Wensum and increasing protection of its biodiversity

The following amendment from **Councillor Stonard** was received.

Inserting the words “**continue to**” before “**develop**” in resolution 2).

Inserting the words “**that promotes public access where safe and appropriate**” after the words “**river frontage**” in resolution 2).

Inserting the words “**the Environment Agency and the government**” after the words “**Anglian Water**” in resolution 3).

Inserting the words “**Continue to**” before the word “**develop**” in resolution 4a).

Inserting the word “**improved**” before the word “**signage**” in resolution 4a).

Inserting the words “**Continue to develop the Biodiversity Implementation Plan and use the Biodiversity Enhancement and Non-native Species Management Plan to**” before the word “**ensure**” in resolution 4b).

Replacing the word “**enhance**” with the words “**the enhancement of**” in resolution 4b).

Inserting the words “**Continue to**” before the word “**work**” in resolution 4c).

Replacing the words “**to make biodiversity**” with the words “**ensure the council’s Biodiversity Action and Plan and Biodiversity Implementation Plan remain**” in resolution 4c).

Inserting the words “**from particularly government and that it also provides appropriate resource and powers to other responsible statutory agencies;**” after the words “**seek funding for this**” in resolution 4c).

Inserting the words “**Continue to**” before the words “**check the**” in resolution 4d).

Inserting the words “**against the Biodiversity Action and the Biodiversity Implementation Plan**” after the words “**Delivery Plan**” in resolution 4d).

Replacing the words “**including mitigating**” with the words “**and continue to mitigate**” in resolution 4d).

Inserting the words “**Continue to**” before the word “**develop**” in resolution 4e).

Inserting the words “**with a continued ambition to ensure the Riverwalk is enhanced for full public access across all areas, forever.**” After the words “**the process**”.

Councillor Galvin had accepted the amendment and as no other member objected, it became part of the substantive motion.

Councillor Galvin proposed and Councillor Price seconded the motion as amended.

“The River Wensum is a rare and special chalk stream river, nationally important and listed as SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and SAC (Special Area of Conservation): the highest nature designations possible in the UK. With a total of over 100 species of plants, a rich invertebrate fauna and a relatively natural corridor, it is ‘probably the best whole river of its type in nature conservation terms’ (Natural England SSSI Citation 1993).

Globally, chalk streams are rarer than rainforest. All of the habitats within the SSSI are intrinsically linked. The cold chalk filtered water provides a rare habitat for a rich aquatic world. Rare and vulnerable species include the Desmoulin’s whorl snail, white-clawed crayfish, brook lamprey, and bullhead. Sadly, the white-clawed crayfish, classed as under severe threat from invasive populations, now looks like it has been driven out of the river entirely, very recently, by crayfish plague carried by non-native crayfish.

The river supports an incredible list of species from chub, pike and eel to kingfisher and little grebe; from sedge warblers to barn owls. Communities of plants include water lilies and the nationally scarce water dropwort. Invertebrates including molluscs, water beetles and mayflies abound.

This amazing river flows through our city; protecting us from flooding, providing a natural corridor, cooling our air; a living link with our natural and cultural heritage. Yet the Wensum is particularly under threat from abstraction and urbanisation; pollution from agriculture and industry; and invasive species. It suffers from a lack of understanding; we take it for granted. Development of use of the river is welcomed, but the importance of its biodiversity must, especially in view of increased threats, be recognised, protected and enhanced. It is important to pursue a ‘whole river’ approach to this living part of our cityscape, recognising and linking up and downstream.

Norwich City Council has led the development of the River Wensum Strategy working with the Broads Authority, Norfolk County Council, the Environment Agency and the Wensum River Parkway Partnership, as the River Wensum Strategy Partnership (RWSP). After consultation, the strategy was launched in June 2018 and an updated Delivery Plan was brought to Cabinet in December 2021. This Strategy focuses on the stretch of the River Wensum corridor from the city council boundary at Hellesdon in the west to Whitlingham Country Park in the east. Other work led by external organisations and groups is ongoing for the area upstream of Hellesdon Mill.

In addition to and working alongside the important actions within the River Wensum Strategy, council **RESOLVES** to:

1. In recognition of its natural and cultural significance and to celebrate and share its importance, investigate whether it is possible to confer any statuses or nominate the river for awards or honours such as freedom of the city in order to actively increase public awareness of its value;
2. Continue to develop its planning policies further to protect biodiversity, mitigate flooding and enhance a wildlife-friendly river frontage that promotes public access where safe and appropriate;
3. Write to Anglian Water, the Environment Agency and the government asking for evidence of what is being done to prevent unacceptable levels of human waste in the water from sewage overflow and that the structural reasons for this are addressed;
4. Work in partnership to:
 - a) Continue to develop and deliver improved signage and other interpretation of the river to increase understanding of its importance, and safe and equal access to its amenity;
 - b) Continue to develop the Biodiversity Implementation Plan and use the Biodiversity Enhancement and Non-native Species Management Plan to ensure links with and the enhancement of the river and riparian environments;
 - c) Continue to work with an extended set of partners including the Norfolk Rivers Trust and River Wensum Strategy Partnership to ensure the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan and Biodiversity Implementation Plan remain a high priority and cross cutting theme of the River Wensum Strategy and seek funding for this from particularly government and that it also provides appropriate resource and powers to other responsible statutory agencies;
 - d) Continue to check the policies in the River Wensum Strategy and actions and projects in the Delivery Plan against the Biodiversity Action Plan and the Biodiversity Implementation Plan for their biodiversity implications, and continue to mitigate against invasive species and the effect of bankside works; and
 - e) Continue to develop a process for community and other groups along the river to bring forward ideas for the strategy and action plan, including finding sources of funding to carry out this work, and publicise this process with a continued ambition to ensure the Riverwalk is enhanced for full public access across all areas, forever.

8(c) Motion: 'Robin Hood' tax on oil and gas firms

As the proposer of the motion had given apologies for the meeting, the motion would be taken at the March meeting of full council.

The meeting was closed.

LORD MAYOR

Appendix A

Informal Council, 25 January 2022 Questions to cabinet members

Question 1

Councillor Maxwell to ask the cabinet member for resources the following question:

“News of the provisional local government finance settlement was revealed shortly before Christmas. Can the cabinet member for resources comment on what this means for our city council?”

Councillor Kendrick, the cabinet member for resources’ response:

“With the Chancellor presenting a three-year Spending Review last October, it was hoped that councils would also receive multi-year funding information. However, for the third year in a row we received only a single year funding settlement, hampering our ability to undertake fully informed long-term financial planning.

There was some positive news on our 2022/23 grant allocations with previous grants being continued, as well as a new one-year Services Grant. Full details of how our funding supports the council’s finances is contained in the budget papers for the February cabinet however, it remains clear that tough budget decisions will continue to be needed.

The Secretary of State also committed to ensuring that councils’ funding is based on an up-to-date assessment of their needs and resources. It is expected that the Department will work with the sector and other stakeholders to update this data ahead of consulting on any potential changes.”

(Supplementary question: Councillor Maxwell commented on Councillor Kendrick’s response and said that it showed that the city council had not only been underfunded but that the settlement had failed to deliver the long-term financial changes needed to stabilise its budget for the future and asked for examples of how this would impact on constituents in the ward that she represented (Crome Ward).

Councillor Kendrick said that the Chancellor had failed to honour the commitment to provide councils with a multi-year funding settlement and that the council received a single year funding settlement for the third year in a row, which hampered its ability to undertake informed long-term financial planning. This needed to be considered in the context of council tax rises arising from the Chancellor’s budget which would affect residents in Crome and across the city at a time, when households are worse off due to increases in National Insurance, higher energy prices and the £1,000 cut to Universal Credit. Under the Conservatives, average council tax bills have risen by 13 per cent (£227), in just three years, with the government dropping a £2bn bombshell in its budget that forced the average household bill up by another £80, with another similar increase expected this year. The council was doing everything that it could to stretch its budgets further. Government cuts meant the council had

been forced to make savings of millions of pounds. Since 2010, the government has reduced core funding to councils by £16bn, and council tax bills have been forced up by £10bn. The government expects councils to raise council tax to fill the funding gap it has created. This council would continue to provide a range of practical services to its most financially vulnerable residents in the city, which included the 100 per cent Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS), Big Switch & Save, ROAR power, energy efficiency improvements to homes and much more.)

Question 2

Councillor Driver to ask the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion the following question:

“Representing a ward that contains significant poverty I know that the impact of a cost-of-living crisis through falling wages, rising prices, energy bills going through the roof, mortgage payments going up, and two tax hikes for national insurance and council tax will be felt very hard indeed. Fuel poverty is a particular concern, so I was particularly pleased to hear of the successful city council bid to receive £2.8m worth of new funding for retrofitting properties in the city to deliver greater energy efficiency. Can the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion comment on the difference this will make in the city?”

Councillor Hampton, the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion’s response:

“We are very pleased to have been awarded £2.8 million from central government to retrofit properties in the city. Securing this funding is part of our ambitious plans on climate change.

Around 230 private-sector homes will benefit from the work, which includes loft, external wall and underfloor insulation. Solar panels and heat pumps will also be installed at some properties. Work commences this Spring and will be completed by March 2023.

The project focuses on homes in fuel poverty and the measures installed will improve the energy efficiency of properties, meaning households generate and retain heat better. We estimate that, as a result, households will save £250,000 on energy bills each year. We also expect the work to reduce carbon emissions by 200,000 kg of CO₂ per year.

This is an important part of our wider fuel poverty and affordable warmth work which includes providing energy advice and helping residents access energy grants and support for insulation measures.”

(Supplementary question – Councillor Driver asked whether £2.8m would be sufficient to make the type of real change that was needed to decarbonise the council’s housing stock in both the private and public sector?)

In reply, Councillor Hampton said that she welcomed this funding opportunity, and it would make a tangible difference to 230 private sector homes in fuel poverty. This was the tip of the iceberg though. The power and resources of central government were required to tackle the climate emergency and cost of living crisis. The lack of

long-term funding for retrofitting properties was a barrier. Short term funding was specific and required delivery within a certain timescale. This made delivery of whole house improvements difficult. The lack of a sustainable funding stream affected the supply chain and availability of skilled workers. A national strategy was needed and was being proposed by the Labour party. Council housing in the city had a higher energy efficiency than the national average and private sector homes in the city. The council had a strong track record in securing funding and making improvements to energy efficiency and use of renewable energy, including the installation of a heat source heating at Barnards Yard.)

Question 3

Councillor Huntley to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for social inclusion the following question:

“Could the cabinet member for social housing comment on the progress being made with building new homes for social rent on the former King’s Arms site?”

Councillor Harris, the deputy leader and cabinet member for social inclusion’s response:

“I am delighted to see development progressing so well following our compulsory purchase of this site.

The site has been a blight on this area for many years. The previous landowner failed to bring forward development, despite securing planning permission and several attempts to work with him.

The council secured planning approval for five new family homes, (four four-bed houses and one two-bed bungalow), which will help meet the identified need in the city.

All the properties are being constructed to an enhanced fabric specification and are equipped with air source heat pumps, reducing fuel costs for residents.

Work commenced in August 2021 and is anticipated to complete in September of this year.

Not only will this development provide much needed, high quality social housing, the council will replicate the model of acquiring stalled sites to deliver housing and regeneration objectives through its new Towns Deal Revolving Fund.”

(Supplementary question: Councillor Huntley referred to the response and asked Councillor Harris if she could comment on the progress being made with building new homes for social rent on the former King’s Arms site?)

Councillor Harris replied that she looked forward to joining Councillor Huntley on site in February to see the progress for themselves. The King’s Arms site was a

relatively small site, but it would provide five homes for social rent. The council had gone through the long, complicated process of compulsory purchase to secure it. The added benefit was the utilisation of a site which had been an eyesore in Mile Cross for years.

The administration recognised the need to build good quality homes of all tenures across the city, but it could not do it alone. The council's own company Norwich Regeneration Limited (NRL) was delivering good quality homes for sale. Sites in Argyle Street, Mile Cross and Three Score had been identified for social housing. The council had developed strong partnership working with registered providers and charities in the city and could enable them to build affordable homes through either the donation of land, commuted sums, or the award of retained Right to Buy receipts that the council was unable to use itself. The council normally retained nomination rights on these developments.

The council strived to support and build accommodation for rough sleepers and should be proud of its partnership working and support for Webster Court and the recently approved development at Kett's Hill. She commented on the House of Lords publication *Housing Demand* and the *Guardian* article on it and said that there was criticism of the effectiveness of the government's Help to Buy Scheme, recognition that there was a need for more social housing and reform of the restrictions on the use of Right to Buy receipts. Last year across the country 29k social homes were sold or demolished and less than 7,000 built and that in England there were now 1.4m fewer households in social housing than in 1980. Therefore, every home that the council could build or enable to be built for social or affordable rent really mattered – every councillor needed to be very mindful of that.)

Question 4

Councillor Stutely to ask the cabinet member for environmental services the following question:

“I have long felt that an alternative to foodbanks, which seem to have become the government's preferred option for all matters involving poverty or lack of social security, need to be found. I was particularly pleased to read that thanks to the work of the city council and the Feed, a new supermarket with a difference will be opening in March, in Lakenham Ward. The community hub, which will sell fresh fruit and vegetables, meat, dairy, and pre-prepared food at affordable prices, will open in what used to be Pat's Cafe in Hall Road. Can the cabinet member for environmental services discuss the benefits this will offer and the hope that similar opportunities for community hubs can be established across the city as practical alternatives to foodbanks?”

Councillor Oliver, the cabinet member for environmental services' response:

“I am delighted that the Social Supermarket on Hall Road will soon be opening. Led by the Feed, working with voluntary, community and social enterprises partners and local people, the supermarket will offer a choice of low-cost food to members, supporting their progression from food insecurity and possible crisis to the ability to budget for and plan meals. It will also use

surplus food, reducing food waste. Volunteering and training opportunities and other support services will be available from the café, alongside the opportunity to socialise in a welcoming and safe space. Cooking classes and recipes will equip people with the skills to create delicious, nutritious, low- cost meals.

This work is part of the Norwich Food Poverty Action Plan. Other Food Network members are working on developing their own social supermarkets, sharing experience and expertise to ensure the offer can reach as many residents as possible. I look forward to seeing their success.”

(Supplementary question: Councillor Stutely commented on the increasing reliance on foodbanks was indicative of the failure of central government to support a properly funded social security system to protect people from poverty through out their lives and hoped that it could be reversed. In the meantime, he asked how the Social Supermarket community hub on Hall Road could make a difference and, if successful, could it be used as a model to roll out across the city?

Councillor Oliver confirmed that she too was looking forward to the opening of the Social Supermarket in Hall Road and hoped it would be a good example of what could be done to help people. It was anticipated that it would be a step up from foodbanks, amidst the background of rising prices and would empower people to purchase food and allow them to participate in shopping for food as normal, rather than relying on handouts, and the benefits of the scheme was that it used food that would otherwise have gone to waste and provided training and social opportunities too. She also advised members that Councillor Davis, cabinet member for social inclusion, had worked tirelessly to set this scheme up to benefit local residents.)

Question 5

Councillor Giles to ask the leader of the council the following question:

“The decline of many green spaces due to cuts in services and resources over many years have been felt in all communities across the city. Thanks to the successful bid for £500,000 from the Community Renewal Fund a real opportunity to support projects in the city which advance biodiversity and wellbeing are now more possible. Can the leader comment on the difference this will make and how community groups can get involved?”

Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:

“I am delighted the council has received this funding for our “100 Day Challenge” project, which creates 8 paid community connectors to engage with their communities to understand community need, whilst building experience, skills and confidence to support people into work and create a wider sense of community.

Improving local green spaces is a focus area. Courses will be offered that cover outdoor project skills such as increasing biodiversity, wildlife friendly food gardening and planting advice. Residents who are thinking about starting an outdoor project will be able to attend alongside those who are more

experienced, for example from running community gardens or “friends of” woods and parks groups, to share skills and develop networks within their communities.

Any groups or members of the public who would like to be involved can contact officers at community@norwich.gov.uk or visit the Get Involved section of the council website.”

(Supplementary question: Councillor Giles referred to the boost that this funding would provide to local communities and asked whether the leader could provide further details of the types of projects it could fund and how local councillors could support these groups to ensure their goals become reality?)

Councillor Waters said that it was too early to provide details of the project as it had only started 14 days’ ago. There had been considerable interest from the voluntary and community sector to engage in outdoor projects, identify training needs and provide skills training. The council had received permission to use £15k underspend, due to government delays in releasing the funding, as a community prize challenge to promote biodiversity and community projects tackling local issues. Members of the council were encouraged to support this initiative which was a great addition to community investments across the city and recognition of the work that community and voluntary groups do in Norwich.)

Question 6

Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth the following question:

“There has been significant interest in the position adopted by the city council with regards to the county council Transport for Norwich Strategy and the proposed Western Link. Can the cabinet comment on how the strategy lacks the ambition and policy necessary for this council to consider supporting?”

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth’s response:

“The city council has long advocated ambitious, radical policies to help people move around the city in a genuinely sustainable way, vital considering the climate crisis. We have persuaded the county council to adopt some such policies in the Transport for Norwich Strategy, e.g., more 20 mph limits and more affordable transport for residents. However, we are disappointed that county did not accept the principle that the road network hierarchy should prioritise transport modes that use least energy, produce least pollution and are most efficient; did not recognise that building roads fuels traffic growth/car dependency; did not demonstrate how building roads frees up space in the city for buses/walking/cycling; and did not commit to an investment package sustainable transport modes exceeding the greater sums committed to road building. For these reasons and others, cabinet resolved not to currently support either the Transport Strategy or Norwich Western Link project contained within it.”

(Supplementary question: Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister referred to the overspend of the budget on the Western Link of £45 million taking the total budget for the scheme to over £100 million and asked how the city council could have used that funding?)

In reply, Councillor Stonard said that the city council would have made better use of that funding to promote its radical transport strategy for the city. The council's vision was based on 13 principles. The first was to address the climate emergency by limiting vehicular emissions in Norfolk and the Greater Norwich area and provided a strategy and policies to support this objective. The second principle was to ensure that health, welfare, and fairness was at the heart of the strategy. Thirdly that there was non-car access to places where people work, learn, shop and were entertained and that transport was affordable. The fourth principle was to design transport schemes that support different modes of sustainable transport, including cycling and walking, and provide infrastructure to support emission free vehicles. The vision included 9 other principles in an ambitious plan for the city.)

Question 7

Councillor Peek to ask the cabinet member for environmental services the following question:

“As someone who has faced homelessness myself, I know the difference which effective accommodation can make to stopping this and remain proud to be a Norwich City Council tenant. I was particularly pleased that the planning committee approved a proposal to build seven one-bedroom houses on our Ketts Hill site to provide accommodation to rough sleepers adding further permanent accommodation for rough sleepers in the city. Can the cabinet member for environmental services comment on the application and the benefits it will provide for some of the most vulnerable of our fellow citizens in this city?”

Councillor Oliver, the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion's response:

“The council is determined to do everything we can to meet affordable housing need in the city and will consider all pieces of land in our ownership for their development potential. Our rough sleeping strategy 2017-22 identified the need for more housing- led projects and we are delivering this through several initiatives. An example of this is the 16 homes we delivered last year through the Next Steps Accommodation Programme for rough sleepers. Our philosophy is to provide a stable, independent home with personalised support to homeless people. We can't do this work in isolation and is why we use a multi-agency approach to help solve homelessness.

The Ketts Hill site is unused council-owned land and was assessed by housing development officers as having potential for new dwellings. Working with Broadland Housing Association, we submitted a bid for funding to the government's Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme and were delighted to secure grant funding for seven new homes, with associated

gardens and parking. Each of the seven one-bed houses in the terrace will enjoy its own private, front door access, with gardens to the front and rear. The majority of the mature, established trees around the perimeter of the site will remain, providing a pleasant outlook and connection to Mousehold Heath. Funding was also awarded to provide support to each of the residents, who will benefit from intensive support to ensure they can stay in their homes in the long term and access help and support in the community. We expect the homes to be ready to move into by the end of the year.”

(There was no supplementary question in the absence of Councillor Peek.)

Question 8

Councillor Price to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth the following question:

“The city council is intending to undertake a review of city centre car parking, the scope of which has yet to be decided. In defining the scope, will the council set objectives and seek outcomes which are compatible with reducing carbon emissions from transport, encouraging major modal shift from the private car to public transport and active travel, and reducing the council’s reliance on income from city centre car parking spaces in its ownership with a view to the council investigating alternative income sources?”

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth’s response:

“The council’s financial plan forecasts that £10.56m of gross savings will need to be found over the four-year period from 2022/23. This quantum of savings represents around 18 per cent of the 2021/22 gross expenditure budget. The car parking service makes a considerable direct contribution to the current revenue budget and maintaining income to meet the significant financial challenges that the council faces is important.

Our car parks also significantly contribute to supporting the city’s economy by providing an accessible and affordable parking to support economic vitality, which is needed more than ever in the light of the pandemic. Alongside this we do recognise the climate emergency and as our recent comments on the Norwich Transport Strategy made clear want to see genuinely ambitious steps taken towards modal shift and reducing the reliance on the private car.

All these policy objectives will also be taken into account in the review.”

(Councillor Price’s supplementary question was declined by the monitoring officer as it was unrelated to his original question or the cabinet member’s response. A point of order was allowed for Councillor Price to make a personal explanation in response to a comment from Councillor Stonard insinuating that Councillor Price was opposed to the bus lane on Kett’s Hill. Councillor Price said that he had not made any representations to the consultation on the proposed bus lane on Kett’s Hill.)

Question 9

Councillor Haynes to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth the following question:

“Regarding affordable housing in new developments approved by the council’s planning committee, what percentage of developments have provided the full recommended amount of affordable homes on-site? Figures from the last year, last five years and last ten years would be helpful to show this, as well as figures showing the percentage of developments which have not provided the full recommended amount of affordable housing provision, whether on-site or via section 106 money.”

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth’s response:

“In the financial year 2021/22 to date, three applications were approved by the planning applications committee that required affordable housing. All three applications were approved with a policy compliant level of affordable housing to be provided on site. We do not monitor levels of affordable housing specifically approved at planning applications committee, and we therefore do not have this information for the last five and 10 years.

However, we do regularly monitor the number of total and affordable dwellings delivered each financial year. In the last monitoring period (2020/21), 12% of housing delivered was affordable. By comparison, across the last five years (2016/17 to 2020/21) 19.4% of housing delivered was affordable, and across the last 10 years (2011/12 to 2015/16) 28.6% of housing delivered was affordable. Full information is published in our Annual Monitoring Report.”

(Supplementary question: Councillor Haynes asked why the council did not keep a record of the levels of affordable housing specifically approved by the planning applications committee? Councillor Stonard said that he would provide a written response to this question.)

Question 10

Councillor Galvin to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth the following question:

“As councillors, we often sit in planning and licensing meetings where members of the public hear that schemes are allowed with conditions. It is therefore vitally important that the council complies with its own conditions when set. I asked urgently, as work is underway, on 24 November and again on 15 December if the conditions regarding the Heigham Park tennis courts have been met and have not had a response. Can you let me know how work on the conditions is progressing and if it is complete?”

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth’s response:

“I apologise for not responding to your previous questions but can confirm that nine conditions were attached to the grant of planning permission for the all-weather tennis courts. Of these, one was the standard time limit condition and three required compliances with information submitted with the application, i.e., no further information was required. The remaining five conditions cover travel plan information; heritage interpretation; arboricultural works; landscaping and site structures. All conditions have been discharged with the exception of heritage interpretation. An application to discharge this was made in December 2021 and is being considered by the Planning Service and is on track for determination before the courts open.”

(Supplementary question: Councillor Galvin said that work on this site had commenced in September referred to her previous questions and this question to council in her attempt to find out if all the conditions attached to the planning condition had been met.

Councillor Stonard said that he could not recall receiving Councillor Galvin’s previous questions and apologised. He would find out when exactly the conditions had been discharged and advise Councillor Galvin in writing.)

Question 11

Councillor Osborn to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth the following question:

“There is routinely congestion outside schools in my ward at school pick-up and drop-off times. For example, outside Jane Austen College, illegal double or sometimes triple-parking causes severe congestion and, with cars idling, dangerous air pollution.

Having raised this matter with the council in early September, I was told that the city council will consult with the county council regarding solutions including mobile cameras that can be located for limited periods in the school area, or a camera car.

Please can I have an update regarding action the city council is taking to address this problem, and if the above solution is not being pursued, can you tell me what actions the council is pursuing?”

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth’s response:

“Parking enforcement around schools is a nationwide issue and is under continuous review by both the city and county councils. Solutions such as camera enforcement have been proposed, but this is not currently permitted outside London. We are hopeful that this will be extended in the near future, and we will work with the county council to investigate its potential once the legislation changes.

In addition, the county council will continue to lobby central government, and organisations such as the British Parking Association and East Anglian Parking partnership for improved guidance and powers.

There is a programme of school parking enforcement, it can take a number of weeks to complete one cycle due to the number of schools (56) exceeding available officers. Problem locations are targeted with additional resources, although this approach only has a short-term effect on driver's behaviour."

(Supplementary question: Councillor Osborn referred to the response and asked Councillor Stonard how "problem locations are targeted with additional resources" were identified and how residents could feed into that process? The area around Colgate, Friars Quay and Muspole Street was a problem location, specifically around drop off and pick times for the school and needed target controls around those times.

Councillor Stonard said that he could not advise Councillor Osborn on how these locations were identified but that it was a reasonable question. He would provide a list of problem locations and ask officers if the location that Councillor Osborn could be included. A written response to this question would be provided.)

Question 12

Councillor Grahame to ask the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion the following question:

"Given the well-publicised cost of living crisis affecting many residents in Norwich and across the UK, caused largely by rapidly rising inflation and soaring utility bills, will the cabinet member join me in calling for the government to provide every household with a £320 payment (funded by a one-off windfall land value tax) to cover spiralling energy bills?"

Councillor Hampton, the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion's response:

"Thank you for this question. The council is aware of the rising utility bills throughout the city and provide a number of services for residents, including energy advice, support on applying to debt reduction funds, small scale insulation measures and helping residents access funding to insulate their homes. We will continue to offer these services and help residents access the appropriate support and advice to help with their fuel bills in light of recent energy price rises. I support the Labour Party's proposals for a windfall tax on North Sea oil and gas to stop energy bills rising over the next year – and to increase and expand the Warm Home's Discount, targeting extra support to squeezed middle, pensioners and the lowest earners; this would save nearly 30,000 households across the Norwich South and North constituencies up to £600 off their bills."

(Supplementary question: Councillor Grahame by way of a supplementary question asked how the council's retrofitting strategy was progressing as it had been promised 10 months' ago?

Councillor Hampton said that retrofitting had been discussed earlier in the meeting and at the climate and environment emergency executive panel meeting. She would provide Councillor Grahame with the timescale for the strategy following consultation with officers.)

Question 13

Councillor Schmierer to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth the following question:

“Over the last few months, several residents have complained that they have struggled to access their properties or use cycleways or the highway itself because of cars illicitly parking either in permit zones or on the carriageway. Places include the Pottergate, Westwick Street, Timberhill and the Ber Street areas. The lack of enforcement seems to have resulted in a parking/stopping “free for all” in these areas. There is clearly a shortage of civil enforcement officers (CEOs), which has been confirmed by officers in the council’s parking team. This has been an ongoing issue for several months now so why has it taken so long to start recruiting more staff to deal with these problems, especially as it takes several months for them to receive the necessary training?”

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth’s response:

“It is correct that for a while earlier in the pandemic there was a freeze on recruiting new civil enforcement officers when staff left; however, this was lifted in the summer. The first round of recruitment resulted in one appointment, and they started in October. Recruitment was repeated in September and from this the remaining two new CEOs were recruited. All three completed their training in early December and so we now have the same number of enforcement officers as we had pre-pandemic.”

(Supplementary question: Councillor Schmierer referred to the statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Enforcing Parking Restrictions and asked why over the last two years and 8 months since restrictions had been eased, it had taken so long for officers to conduct appraisals for parking enforcement?)

Councillor Stonard said that it was not just an issue of numbers of CEO’s employed but also that during the pandemic, officers had been redeployed to other duties as considered appropriate at the time. Enforcement should have returned to normal levels now.)

Question 14

Councillor Champion to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth the following question:

“The council is aware of the efforts of local residents to start a community garden on derelict land at 44-46 Morley Street. The efforts have ground to halt because the land, which is owned by the council, is contaminated. Residents would like to know how and why this land is contaminated and how much it

would cost to make it safe to use as a community garden. Could the council provide this information to me and the residents?"

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth's response:

"The land at 44-46 Morley Street has been investigated and has not been designated as contaminated under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. However, the soil at the property does contain some substances commonly found in urban areas, that are above the levels considered appropriate for the proposed use. Recommendations have been received from a specialist geotechnical engineer detailing options for treating the land to make it suitable. There are no up-to-date accurate costs for remediation however the ground investigation report is available online as part of a planning consent granted in 2012 for demolition on the site."

(Supplementary question: Councillor Champion said that residents had tried to establish a community garden in March last year and that he had raised the question to the council in November and it had taken a question at council to get a response, albeit vague. It was no wonder that community activists were frustrated.

Councillor Stonard said that he had only become aware of this issue through Councillor Champion's question at council and this would be investigated.)

Question 15

Councillor Wright to ask the cabinet member for health and wellbeing the following question:

"At budget council in Feb 2021, council agreed a budget that included a provision for income generation of £50,000 from a "new income stream generated by charging for parking in parks which currently provide free parking."

Could the cabinet member please let me know how much income has been generated so far this financial year, and if it has not met the projected £50,000, how the shortfall has been met?"

Councillor Packer, the cabinet member for health and wellbeing's response:

"Due to capacity issues within the parks and open spaces team, the implementation of this saving has been delayed. These have now been addressed, and the proposal will be implemented in the coming weeks. As a result, no income has yet been generated by this proposal. The shortfall has been met by underspends and higher than anticipated income in other parts of the service."

(There was no supplementary question in the absence of Councillor Wright.)

Question 16

Councillor Carlo to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth the following question:

“The Norwich Evening News reported, in December, high levels of coliform bacteria from human and animal waste, identified in a sample of river water collected at Carrow Bridge. The local press previously highlighted 720 raw sewage spills into the River Wensum from drains in the Riverside Road area in 2020. This situation is clearly unacceptable in so many ways, and completely contrary to the River Wensum Strategy which seeks to improve use and enjoyment of the river and its biodiversity. The city council owns the riverbed south of New Mills and has an interest in maintaining a healthy river. Also, the council chairs the River Wensum Strategy Partnership, which includes the Environment Agency (EA) and Anglian Water (AW). What action is the city council taking to put pressure on the EA and AW to stop the practice of allowing raw sewage to run into the River Wensum and achieve good quality water?”

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth’s response:

“The reported sewage spills in the River Wensum and resulting impact on water quality and biodiversity are concerning for the River Wensum Strategy Partnership (RWSP). Responsibility for sewage spills lies with Anglian Water (AW) who are not members of RWSP. However, the Environment Agency (EA) is a member and has responsibility for monitoring water quality and a regulatory role regarding unconsented sewage spills to rivers. The council has contacted the EA to raise concerns who have informed us they are working with government, the water industry, farmers, and others to improve water quality in rivers and is seeking more funding to protect the environment in England. Locally, the EA work closely with the Broadland Catchment Partnership including water company and land management representation to identify and implement catchment wide environmental improvement projects within the River Wensum catchment. The EA continues to work to improve river standards through regulatory/permitting/partnership work.”

(Supplementary question: Councillor Carlo thanked Councillor Stonard for his response and for ensuring that the council contacted the EA about the concerns of sewage in the River Wensum which would deter users of the river and tourists. She asked for regular updates on discussions with the EA and putting pressure on AW to stop this practice. In reply, Councillor Stonard said that he would be speaking later in the meeting on this issue.)

Question 17

Councillor Bogelein to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing the following question:

“Last year, Mancroft councillors were told that the council would go out to tender for a new secure entry system by October. That appears not to have

happened. Can the cabinet member reassure residents who have to face finding faeces, vomit, needles and blood in their stairwells by explaining the reasons for the delay and committing to a date by which the new contract will be in place?"

Councillor Harris, the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing's response:

"Consultation on the installation of secure entry systems commenced in October 2021. At the same time, planning applications were submitted by NPSN to progress upcoming works. A number of observations were received from residents regarding potential costs and quality of the proposed works. These observations are being used to shape the ongoing procurement process with a provisional date of going to cabinet for contract award in the spring. Further conversations will take place with ward councillors to support the programme."

(Supplementary question: Councillor Bogelein referred to concern that was a high priority to the residents and asked why there was another delay.

Councillor Harris acknowledged the high priority to install secure entry systems for residents, not just in this ward but in other wards too and explained that there had been a pause to ensure that the contract was right. There had been a change of senior officers in housing and an opportunity to use their expertise. The consultation with residents had commenced in October. The council wanted to move forward on this as soon as possible but it was an important contract that needed to be right.)